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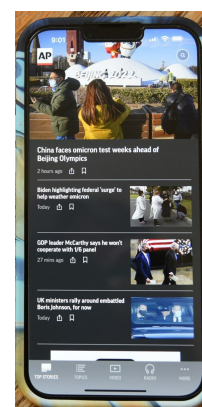
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Connecting

Aug. 7, 2023

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Colleagues,

Good Monday morning on this Aug. 7, 2023,

An AP retiree who has scratched his itch to play in a rock band.

A question: does anyone proof the social media accounts of major news outlets?

A new position at George Washington University for our colleague Jesse Holland.

And one of Connecting's nonagenarians who writes about outrageous ageism sweeping through the company.

These are highlights of today's Connecting.

Here's to a great week ahead – be safe, stay healthy, live each day to your fullest.

Paul

The Wing Thing

Jerry Cipriano - Who writes the headlines for the social media accounts of major news outlets? Are there any experienced editors to proofread them? This is a Washington Post headline (8/4/23) on X, formerly known as Twitter, for a story about a debate between Governors Ron DeSantis and Gavin Newsom:

@washingtonpost

Republican presidential hopeful and right-wing Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis has agreed to finally meet California's Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom on the debate stage. Fox News host Sean Hannity will moderate the live debate.

The Post describes DeSantis as "right-wing," perhaps suggesting to readers it's a bad thing. But Newsom is not described as left-wing. And, by the way, there is no mention that moderator Hannity is a conservative, which might be the adjective most worthy of including in a story about a debate between a conservative and a progressive.

The AP Stylebook says of the wing thing, "Generally try to avoid in describing political leanings."

Rockin' After Retirement



Jeff Baenan performing on keyboards at Rock Camp Experience Rockabilly Camp at Outtakes Bar & Grill in New Hope, Minnesota, on April 16, 2023. He is on the left in above. Photos by Laura Baenan.



Jeff Baenen - Sept. 1 marks three years since I retired after 42 years with AP. One of my goals in retirement is to do things I never had time for while I was working. This spring, I scratched my itch to play in a rock band, something I had not done since my garage band days.

At AP I wrote about Rock Camp for Dads (now known as The Rock Camp Experience (RCX) <https://rockcampexperience.com>), which allows you to unleash your Inner Hendrix (my AP video is on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CWjU9hzdaYo>). You are thrown together with other amateur musicians at the same skill level in a four-week camp at the soundproof RCX building in a Minneapolis suburb. I auditioned on keyboards and electric guitar and was found to be at mid-level on keys. I joined the Rockabilly Camp and after four weekly rehearsals, my fellow campers and I were on stage at a Twin Cities cinema bar and grill, playing a free gig on April 16.

We played a brisk set including the Stray Cats' "Rock This Town," Jerry Lee Lewis' "Breathless" and Queen's "Crazy Little Thing Called Love." Two other acts followed us. We got a good reception, and my 91-year-old mother-in-law who attended said I was excellent.

I had not been on a musical stage for years, and enjoyed the chance to step outside my comfort zone. I encourage all AP retirees to do the same!

Click [here](#) for a video taken by Laura Baenan of the performance.

GWU's School of Media and Public Affairs names Jesse Holland as new associate director

The School of Media and Public Affairs at George Washington University has named Jesse Holland as its associate director for the next three years. He is an award-winning author, journalist, television personality and educator.



Holland was a longtime congressional, Supreme Court and White House reporter with The Associated Press. He has also served as a guest host on C-SPAN and a columnist for an

MSNBC . Holland has written for major entertainment franchises, including Lucasfilm's "Star Wars," DC Comics' "Superman" and Marvel's "Black Panther."

Click [here](#) for link to this story.

[Jesse](#) added this in a Facebook post –

I'm looking forward to working with new SMPA Director Peter Loge, the faculty and the SMPA staff to make our school the place to learn journalism, public relations and communications.

One of my new duties is finding new speakers and adjuncts to work at SMPA, so if some of you comms people and journalists are looking for a way to give back, consider teaching a class or speaking to a class at GW or maybe even becoming a mentor to some of our students. It's our job to expose our students to the best and brightest in their fields, so we want you to come to GW and share your experiences, the lessons you've learned, the ways your industry is changing and what it's like for you out there in the real world. (And hey, if you have some internship spots available, we'd love to place some of our SMPA superstars with you!)

And if you don't have time to teach or lecture YET, you can still share with us your experience and knowledge to let us know what new classes we should be teaching, what special skills our students need to know, what online courses we should be scheduling, what weekend intensives we should be planning. All you have to do is email or call me, and we'll talk about making it happen. We're always trying to keep up with the ever-changing media and comms business.

All of this goes double for our GW alums and SMPA graduates! We want to see you back in Foggy Bottom, helping shape the future of media and public affairs.

This new position will definitely be a challenge, but it's one that I'm looking forward to. With everyone's support, we'll train the next generation and continue to Raise High standards for the journalism and communications business.

No gray hair in the White House?

[Norm Abelson](#) - Recently I've begun thinking about whether, at my advanced age, I have the wits and physical and mental acuity to run for President of the United States. Maybe it's my ego speaking, but I think I do. Whether I'd be any good at the job is another matter.

First, let me tell you that in the world in which I grew up, advanced age was generally equated with experience, thoughtfulness, reflection and wisdom. This old African saying I've quoted often puts it well: "When an old man dies, a library burns down."

Okay, the real reason for my thinking is to make a point about the outrageous ageism spreading across the nation, and its magnification both by the literati on the opinion pages of major publications, and, of course, by the ever-present screeds of the political ignoramuses on the internet.

Joe Biden, they say, is just too damn old. After all, remember the time he skipped a few words in a speech, or when he tripped?. And besides, what are his credentials? Merely a lifetime of public service, being elected by the voters, time after time, to the nation's three highest offices, working knowledge of the most arcane processes in the system, and his personal relations with many of the world's key leaders. Also, this is the tottering old-guy who defeated you-know-who. But they say Joe's just too old.

But wait a minute, listen to this: In a long-time study of presidential longevity, statistics showed that down through the years, presidents, contrary to popular belief, tend to live quite a bit longer than their male contemporaries. The first eight presidents, for example, lived an average of 80 years at a time when the average male life span was about 40. And, the statistics showed that trend has held true down through the years.

Also at the first Constitutional Convention in 1787, 13 of the delegates were in their 50s and 60s, well past the average length of life, under 40 in those days. The results showed they seemed to have been well-functioning, as was the Convention's senior member, a guy you may have heard of, named Benjamin Franklin. He was 81.

The Founding Fathers set a minimum age for the President, and members of Congress, but no maximum. Think maybe they knew something? Perhaps the real question should be at the other end: how young is too young – and green – to hold high office

However, if we are going to change that by ageing out presidential contenders, then shouldn't we also age out Congress, the Supreme Court, and governors? How about mayors, city councilors, etc., etc.?

Meanwhile, in the real world, with a few exceptions, we are faced in the upcoming elections with a panoply of (younger) incompetents, extremists, careerists and unknown buffoons.

The ideas being pushed by the ageists, it seems, are that leadership should no longer be about what you know or what you've accomplished. It's how fast you can make it up the stairway.

Stories of interest

The week's diverging news realities, depending on your cable channel (Washington Post)

Analysis by Philip Bump

It was not only House Speaker Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) who deliberately juxtaposed the most recent indictment of former president Donald Trump with the Republican investigation of President Biden's son Hunter.

"It seems like every time Trump goes higher in the polls, he gets a new indictment," McCarthy said during a news conference on Thursday. "It seems to me, after you learn

of the real dealing behind the Bidens, the next day, he gets indicted.”

This is not true. In fact, Trump’s surge in the polls earlier this year began immediately after he was indicted in New York. The idea that Trump indictments follow revelations about Hunter Biden is nothing more than a cherry-picking from the endless, near-daily stream of Republican efforts to gin up something damaging about the president or his son.

But, again, it’s not only McCarthy making this comparison. On cable news, the same dichotomy exists. Fox News and Fox Business have spent nearly as much time talking about Hunter Biden and his former business partner Devon Archer this week as they have Trump and the word “indictment.” On CNN and MSNBC, it’s very different.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Dennis Conrad.

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Texas A&M board members sought a journalism program that would churn out conservatives to 'direct our message,' according to text messages

(Insider)

Kenneth Niemeyer

Some members of Texas A&M University's Board of Regents reportedly want the school's journalism program to churn out conservatives.

Jay Graham, one of the Texas A&M board members who ousted a journalist after she accepted the job as the school's journalism director, talked about wanting to have a program that would produce "high-quality conservative Aggie journalists into the market," according to text messages seen by KBTX and the Texas Tribune.

"We were going to start a journalism department to get high-quality conservative Aggie students into the journalism world to help direct our message," Graham said in a text message to fellow board member David Baggett obtained by KBTX.

Graham did not immediately respond to multiple requests for comment sent to him and his company. TAMU also did not immediately respond to Insider's request for comment.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Doug Pizac.

-0-

NYT staffers fume after meeting with AG Sulzberger: 'He murdered the sports desk' (New York Post)

By Alexandra Steigrad

New York Times staffers were left fuming after their boss turned a deaf ear at a long-sought sit-down to complaints about the Gray Lady's decision to disband the sports department, The Post has learned.

According to sources, Times chairman and publisher AG Sulzberger agreed to meet with sports journalists on Thursday at company headquarters in Midtown— nearly a month after news leaked he was shuttering its sports division in September and replacing it with coverage from The Athletic, a sports news site it bought last year for a whopping \$550 million.

Times higher-ups had outlined a plan to move the roughly 40 unionized sports journalists to different desks — and rely on The Athletic, which employs about 500 non-unionized workers, for daily coverage.

“The entire newsroom is outraged at how badly this has been handled and how poorly the sports staffers have been treated,” a source said.

Staffers at the meeting griped that many journalists have been reassigned to new beats “haphazardly” without much consultation and that some feel their goals and careers as sports writers have been flushed away by the paper.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Paul Albright.

The Final Word

ZITS By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman



Shared by Adolphe Bernotas

Today in History - Aug. 7, 2023



By The Associated Press

Today is Monday, Aug. 7, the 219th day of 2023. There are 146 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Aug. 7, 1942, U.S. and other allied forces landed at Guadalcanal, marking the start of the first major allied offensive in the Pacific during World War II.

On this date:

In 1789, the U.S. Department of War was established by Congress.

In 1882, the famous feud between the Hatfields of West Virginia and the McCoys of Kentucky erupted into full-scale violence.

In 1963, first lady Jacqueline Kennedy gave birth to a boy, Patrick Bouvier Kennedy, who died two days later of respiratory distress syndrome.

In 1964, Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin resolution, giving President Lyndon B. Johnson broad powers in dealing with reported North Vietnamese attacks on U.S. forces.

In 1971, the Apollo 15 moon mission ended successfully as its command module splashed down in the Pacific Ocean.

In 1989, a plane carrying U.S. Rep. Mickey Leland, D-Texas, and 14 others disappeared over Ethiopia. (The wreckage of the plane was found six days later; there were no survivors.)

In 1990, President George H.W. Bush ordered U.S. troops and warplanes to Saudi Arabia to guard the oil-rich desert kingdom against a possible invasion by Iraq.

In 1998, terrorist bombs at U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania killed 224 people, including 12 Americans.

In 2005, ABC News anchorman Peter Jennings died in New York at age 67.

In 2007, San Francisco's Barry Bonds hit home run No. 756 to break Hank Aaron's storied record with one out in the fifth inning of a game against the Washington Nationals, who won, 8-6.

In 2010, Elena Kagan was sworn in as the 112th justice and fourth woman to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court.

In 2015, Colorado theater shooter James Holmes was spared the death penalty in favor of life in prison after a jury in Centennial failed to agree on whether he should be executed for his murderous attack on a packed movie premiere that left 12 people dead.

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama's five-year effort to reboot U.S.-Russian relations crashed as the White House abruptly canceled his planned face-to-face summit with Russia's Vladimir Putin. The Major League Baseball Players Association formally appealed Alex Rodriguez's drug probe suspension, sending the case to an independent arbitrator. (The suspension was withheld.)

Five years ago: Sharice Davids won a Democratic congressional primary in Kansas, becoming the state's first Native American and gay nominee for Congress. (Davids went on to become one of the first two Native American women elected to the House.) The fourth suspect in the shooting death of emerging South Florida rap star XXXTentacion turned himself in to authorities. Chicago police said they would deploy hundreds of additional officers to neighborhoods where a burst of gun violence over the weekend left at least 11 people dead and 70 wounded. Hall of Fame hockey forward Stan Mikita, who helped the Chicago Black Hawks win the 1961 Stanley Cup, died at the age of 78.

One year ago: Democrats pushed their estimated \$740 billion election-year economic package through the Senate. The hard-fought compromise was less ambitious than President Joe Biden's original domestic vision but it still met deep-rooted party goals of slowing global warming, moderating pharmaceutical costs and taxing immense corporations. A cease-fire between Israel and Palestinian militants took effect in a bid to end nearly three days of violence that killed dozens of Palestinians and disrupted the lives of hundreds of thousands of Israelis. Colombia's first leftist president, Gustavo Petro, was sworn into office, promising to fight inequality and heralding a turning point in the history of a country haunted by a long war between the government and guerrilla groups.

Today's Birthdays: Singer Lana Cantrell is 80. Former FBI Director Robert Mueller is 79. Actor John Glover is 79. Actor David Rasche is 79. Former diplomat, talk show host and activist Alan Keyes is 73. Country singer Rodney Crowell is 73. Actor Caroline Aaron is 71. Comedian Alexei Sayle is 71. Actor Wayne Knight is 68. Rock singer Bruce Dickinson is 65. Marathon runner Alberto Salazar is 65. Actor David Duchovny is 63. Actor Delane Matthews is 62. Actor Harold Perrineau is 60. Jazz musician Marcus Roberts is 60. Country singer Raul Malo is 58. Actor David Mann is 57. Actor Charlotte Lewis is 56. Actor Sydney Penny is 52. Actor Greg Serano is 51. Actor Michael Shannon is 49. Actor Charlize Theron is 48. Rock musician Barry Kerch is 47. Actor Eric Johnson

is 44. Actor Randy Wayne is 42. Actor-writer Brit Marling is 41. NHL center Sidney Crosby is 36. MLB All-Star Mike Trout is 32. Actor Liam James is 27.

Got a story or photos to share?

Connecting is a daily newsletter published Monday through Friday that reaches more than 1,800 retired and former Associated Press employees, present-day employees, and news industry and journalism school colleagues. It began in 2013. Past issues can be found by clicking Connecting Archive in the masthead. Its author, Paul Stevens, retired from the AP in 2009 after a 36-year career as a newsman in Albany and St. Louis, correspondent in Wichita, chief of bureau in Albuquerque, Indianapolis and Kansas City, and Midwest vice president based in Kansas City.

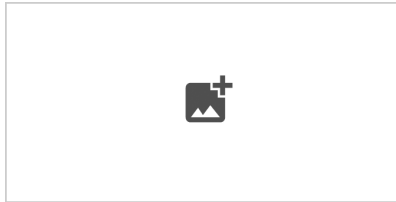


Got a story to share? A favorite memory of your AP days? Don't keep them to yourself. Share with your colleagues by sending to Ye Olde Connecting Editor. And don't forget to include photos!

Here are some suggestions:

- **Connecting "selfies"** - a word and photo self-profile of you and your career, and what you are doing today. Both for new members and those who have been with us a while.
- **Second chapters** - You finished a great career. Now tell us about your second (and third and fourth?) chapters of life.
- **Spousal support** - How your spouse helped in supporting your work during your AP career.
- **My most unusual story** - tell us about an unusual, off the wall story that you covered.
- **"A silly mistake that you make"**- a chance to 'fess up with a memorable mistake in your journalistic career.
- **Multigenerational AP families** - profiles of families whose service spanned two or more generations.
- **Volunteering** - benefit your colleagues by sharing volunteer stories - with ideas on such work they can do themselves.
- **First job** - How did you get your first job in journalism?
- **Most unusual** place a story assignment took you.

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